Multi-Purpose Identity Cards in Meghalaya

*19. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Meghalaya Government has urged the Centre to introduce multi-purpose identity cards to check the influx of foreign nationals into the State; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken to issue citizen's identity cards to check illegal migration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Presently, the Government have initiated a Pilot Project on as experimental basis in a few selected sub-districts of 13 States and Union Territories which is expected to be completed by June, 2005. The main scheme in the entire country would be implemented after taking into account the experiences and lessons drawn from the Pilot Project.

Import of Raw Silk from China

*20. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our silk exporters are forced to import raw silk from China due to inferior quality of our raw silk and its high price;

(b) whether it is a fact that the price of Chinese silk is lower than that of ours;

(c) whether Government have enquired into matter to overcome these shortcomings; and

(d) if so, what are its end resutls?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) Raw silk production in India is estimated at 15742 MT (2003-04) while demand is estimated is 25000 per annum. Government of India has, therefore, permitted import of raw silk under Open General Licnece (OGL).

(b) China was exporting raw silk to India at low prices which had a disruptive effect on the domestic market of silk. The prices of imported

raw silk fell from US$ 24.50 per kg. in May, 2001 to US$ 13.50 in June, 2003. In order to protect the interests of raw silk producers anti-dumping duty was imposed by Govt. of India with effect from 2nd January, 2003 on all imported mulberry raw silk (not thrown) of international grade 2A and below, originated in or exported from People's Republic of China, so as to keep the landed value of these goods at US$ 27.97 per kg.

(c) Several programmes and schemes to increase the quality, productivity and the competitiveness of the domestic silk industry have been instituted. The major ones are:—

* Research and Development efforts of Central Silk Board have been stepped up to improve quantity and productivity of sericulture, by evolution of more productive and stress tolerant breeds and hybrids of mulberry and non-mulberry food plants and silkworms; and develpment of low cost reeling and processing technologies in silk;

* Seed Support & Technical Assistance is being given by the Central Silk Board to State Governments, farmers & reelers by maintenance of parent races and basic seed, supply of commercial seed, and augmentation of grainage facilities for production of disease free high yielding and drought resistant seeds;

* Central assistance is being extended to states through Centrally Sponsored & Central Sector Schemes to strengthen farm infrastructure, increase area under sericulture, upgrade reeling facilities, improve finishing processes, strengthen cocoon & silk testing systems;

* Low cost and productivity enhancing technologies developed by the Central Silk Board are being popularized through central assistance to beneficiaries, training to the States' extension machinery and beneficiaries, organizing of various awareness programmes, etc.,

* For technology upgradation of the indigenous silk industry loan at 5% point less than applicable bank rate, under the Technological Upgradation Fund Schemes (TUFS) for the textiles sector is available *inter alia* to silk sector.

* Supply chain issues between the farmers, raw silk producers and the weavers are being addressed by advocating contract farming models, price linked grading, etc.

* An amount of Rs. 450 crores has been provided in the X Plan for the sericulture sector to support the above strategy & programmes;

(d) Sericulture is being taken up in 25 States and production of raw silk stood at 15742 MT(P) in 2003-04. Productivity of mulberry silk has increased from 49.77 kg./ha. to 75.46 kg./ha. over seven years. Exports of silk goods have risen, and reached Rs. 2576.52 crores in 2003-04.

Training facilities for the MES Officers and Staff

1. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the strength of MES Officers and subordinate staff is approximately 1.5 lakh;

(b) if so, whether there are any training facilities for them;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether there is any proposal to provide proper training institute for them; and

(e) if so, when the institute is expected to function?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) A training institute, namely College of Military Engineering exists at Pune which also imparts training to MES officers and subordinate staff. There is no proposal to provide any other institute.

(e) Does not arise.